the bridegroom and part with her parents. The bridewealth payments now begin and the wife's parents try to hurry up the payments by luring her home on frequent visits. The bridegroom cannot prevent her departure or demand her return. To get her to return he hands over another animal and she then stays with him for a short while. This procedure is repeated until the bride is definitely recognised as his wife and stays with him except for brief visits to her old home.

The *riso* ceremony is the binding act of marriage. After it the husband is entitled to redress if the wife has intercourse with other men. As the husband is anxious to start a home and cannot do so while his wife keeps running back to her parents, he presses for the *riso* ceremony to be held as soon as he has paid 6 to 12 head of cattle. It is rare for a marriage to be broken off after this stage has been reached. The *riso* ceremony is held in the husband's homestead and is a day of celebration. The wife is given a series of presents by her husband's people, each gift being named as it is presented to her. She herself keeps none of them and they are taken by the girls of the *riso* party from her parents' village.

The final ceremony takes place a few months later when the husband tells his wife to cook for him instead of cooking in his mother's hut. Usually after the birth of the first child he begins to built an *ot* - a proper dwelling; up to this time the couple have lived in the bachelors' hut (*simba*). Necessary household articles are collected by the wife from her parents' home and so, after a great number of ceremonies and rituals, the union is accomplished and the basis of a family is laid.

RESPECT (*LUR*)

The Luo practise extensive avoidance as a part of the general attitude of respect to a wife's family. A man turns his back to his parents-in-law when speaking to them and avoids them if he meets them on a path. He never visits his mother-in-law naked.(1) This attitude of respect is extended to all the members of his wife's lineage, particularly the older people, and including the lineage of her maternal uncle. The husband's brothers, on the other hand, respect only his parents-in-law and immediate kin of their generation.

The avoidance rules are relaxed as the marriage gradually grows more stable and children are born. A ceremony is held at the birth of the first child to enable the husband to enter his mother-in-law's hut and eat there. The husband and his brothers are invited to eat after a goat has been presented to them.(2)

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The Luo believe in a supreme being whom they call Nyasi. He is

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, XX, p.141. (2) *Ibid.*

776 believed to be the creator and originator of all things but he is not worshipped. Birth and death are ascribed to his action. According to Roscoe, Nyasi is found in large trees, and in time of trouble or sickness offerings are made to him of an animal killed under a large tree; the meat is eaten at a little distance away.(1)

[777] Johnston states that the Luo believe in a supreme god, Chieng, which is the name for the sun.(2) Stam, however, relegates the sun to an inferior position and writes that when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and then to the north, south and west and implores the sun to give him good luck.(3) Northcote states that Luo worship the sun and, to a lesser degree, the moon. A similar spitting ritual is practised when the new moon appears.(4)

It is impossible at present to give a comprehensive account of Luo beliefs from the scanty information available.

ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

775 There is very little information on the ancestral cult. Evans-Pritchard describes a troublesome ghost *(jacien,* pl. *jociendi)* and the Luo methods of dealing with it. *Jacien* is the Luo equivalent of the Shilluk *cien*, the Acholi *lacen*, Lango *chyen* and the Anuak *acieni*. A spirit which has been forgotten by the living; the ghost of a man who died resentful or angry - or of a murdered man whose kin have not exacted revenge - any [753 of these may become a *jacien*, and cause harm to those who wronged it. The 626] Luo regard ghosts as one of the principal causes of sickness and other misfortunes, and, since it is held that almost any wrong done to a kinsman may be punished by him after death, this belief is a powerful sanction of conduct within the family and kinship group.(5)

755 The diviner *(ajuago)* discovers the cause of sickness and, if it is due to a particular spirit, sacrifices are offered at his grave with appro-775 priate ritual. If the ghost is not appeased by this attention, another magician is called in, the *mugalu*. To protect the sick man's homestead the *mugalu* buries in or near it a pot containing medicines. In the last resort the *jadilo* is called in; an ox is sacrifices and the ghost warned that if he does not cease his activities his bones will be dug up, burned and the ashes thrown into the lake or marsh.

775 Normally, a ghost only haunts a kinsman, but a man who has been mur-783 dered may haunt his murderer. Purificatory rites are performed for someone who has killed a man in battle; these are conducted by a man called *jagut* who has himself slain a man in battle.

775 It is believed that some ghosts become nature spirits dwelling in water and air, while others occupy the gourds used by diviners and answer the questions put to them.

(1) Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, p.291.
(2) Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1902, Vol.II, p.791.
(3) Stam, *Anthropos*, 1910, p.360.
(4) Northcote, *J.R.A.I.*, 1907, p.63
(5) Evans-Pritchard, *Man*, 1950 (July), No.133, p.86.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

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When a chief dies the son chosen by the chief succeeds him; the successor is chosen as a rule some years before the chief dies. The successor will however divide the private property of his father with his brothers like anyone else.

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Beliefs.—They call the Divinity by the name Chieng, which is the sun; when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and in the evening he expectorates to the west. If the sunset is extremely red it is said to be a sign that an important man will die in the tribe. They believe that the spirit of a man goes upwards at death.

If a hailstorm occurs no one goes to work in the fields on the following day.

Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war.

[pp. 36-51 not processed]

9: Owen M-5 (ca. 1920)1933 FL11 Luo FL11

FOOD PRODUCTION AND KINDRED MATTERS, AMONGST THE LUO.

By Archdeacon W. E. Owen.

(Paper read at the 3rd Annual Scientific Meeting held in Nov., 1933.)

Soil:

134 The production of food must necessarily be associated with knowledge of the soil. The principal soil varieties have been named by the Luo, and the methods appropriate to each variety are well known. Black cotton soil, called " anywang," occurs over a wide area, mainly around the lake shores, and is conspicuous in the locations of Uyoma, Karachwonya, Kasigunga and the Kano Plains. Red earth, called " lwala," is, speaking generally, found further back from the lake, on the higher lands, and is to be found over wide tracts in Central and South Kavirondo, a notable location being North Gem, in Central Kavirondo. Sandy soil, called " kwoyo," is generally found in the neighbourhood of outcrops of granite, which is a prominent feature in many parts. The locations of Asembo in Central Kavirondo, and Suna in South Kavirondo are good examples of areas where this sandy soil is abundant. Murram, called " gu " when solid and " ge " when disintegrated into a soil, occurs in places all over the country, Sakwa and Alego in particular providing many examples of it. Stony soil, called " kite," is to be found over large stretches, particularly in those neighbourhoods where escarpments rise from the regions round the lake. Though the labour involved in the cultivation of this stony soil is very great, where there is pressure of population, every available patch is made to produce food.

Rainfall:

132 Over certain sections of the country rainfall is very uncertain. The worst locations in this respect are lower Seme, Uyoma, Sakwa, Kadimo, parts of Asembo, Mirunda, Kasigunga and Rusinga. In other districts rainfall is abundant, running from forty to sixty five inches in the year, well distributed over the months, with the exception of January and early February. January is reckoned to be the driest [526] month of the year, and is the month when there is most relaxation from agricultural operations, this being the favourite time for the inter-clan wrestling matches.

789 Contrary to what many would expect, amongst people who
782 periodically suffer from lack of rain, the Luo have developed no system
776 of rain makers. At the top of Usenge Hill in Kadimo, there is still to be seen a site marked by a collection of votive pots, where the local

789 elders gathered to offer sacrifice and supplicate the local spirit,
782 together with the clan spirits, in times of great drought, but this is
entirely different from the rain-making cult. Even in this instance,
776 it is doubtful whether the ceremony has not been influenced in large measure by the neighbouring Bantu peoples. The particular guardian spirit of this hill, is reputed to be a fabulously big snake, so enormous as to be able to encircle the hill with its body. Away from the Lake shore, which suffers most from uncertain rainfall, the Luo account very easily for the fact that they have no rain-makers. They simply say that they never have lack of rain, so why should they have rain-makers.

791 But though they have no rain-makers, they have a term for rain-maker, whom they call " Jajimb koth." When they need a rain-maker they employ either a Bantu from the Basiekwe clan of the Banyole, or one from Mudhiero, Yiro in Marama. And, of course, it is not alone for agriculture that rain is needed. The fishing in the rivers suffers greatly when the rivers run low, and fishermen not infrequently call in the aid of the rain-maker. On the lower reaches
[782] of the Nzoia River, there existed a custom now happily extinct, according to which human sacrifice was made to the spirit of the river. The unfortunate person to be sacrificed was a girl, generally a young one and ill-favoured, who was bound, and some accounts say stunned, before being cast into the river. Rain-makers still flourish, though shorn of much of their influence and tribute. Only a few years ago I was in Uyoma during a time of rain shortage. I happened to be collecting genealogies, and was visiting the old men for this purpose. The conversation turned on the lack of rain, and I asked had they sent for the rain-maker. I really did not expect that they would have done so, and was somewhat surprised to find that they had sent their offerings to one of the Bantu of the Basiekwe clan. It seemed a pity that they should waste their substance on what could do them no
[609] earthly good, so I spent some time trying to convince them that the rain-maker had no power to bring rain. They listened very politely, but at the end of it were " of the same opinion still." I left them gently poking fun at them for being so credulous. I was about a mile or less from my camp, and during my walk home, suddenly, from nowhere, clouds rushed up, a violent rain storm pelted down and I got thoroughly drenched. I would have given a good deal to have been able to listen to the comments of those who had heard so politely my well-meant arguments. Incidents somewhat like this are, no doubt, responsible for the deep seated faith in the rain-makers' powers. It did not convince me.

241 The preparation of the soil for the seed was, and is, performed
791 without any ceremony of invocation preceding it, except when the land had been taken in conquest from enemies. In the latter case the

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

butter being used for cooking a special meal which is eaten by the owner of the cow and his wife; a little of the butter is set aside and they smear it on their lips, but none of it may be smeared on their bodies. After the meal has been eaten, the cow is milked regularly and the milk may now be drunk by all the family.

Oxen used for riding. Oxen are frequently used for riding. The young men train the animals to this and ride them constantly. They turn them as they wish by prodding the side of the animal's cheek with a stick from which it turns away. The animals are trained, however, to obey the voice rather than wait for the stick. They trot along at a fast rate and cover the ground quicker than a man can walk.

Sheep and goats. Sheep and goats are kept by all villagers. Goats especially are eaten by men and women without any restrictions. Fowls are also kept, though, as is usual among most African tribes, fowls have to find their own food, and their chickens are constantly preyed upon by hawks and kites, and those that grow up are of a poor and miserable kind.

Building.

Architecture and mode of building. The houses are round huts with conical thatched roofs They have an outer wall of stakes three and sometimes four feet high with mud smeared over them on the inside and a central pole passing through the roof, to which the rafters are attached. The roof is thatched with grass and the end of the central pole, which passes through the roof, is rudely carved. The houses are grouped together, leaving room enough to pass between them, and a growing fence surrounds them. Many villages have no outer fence, but are built high up the hill-sides for protection from hostile clans.

Religion.

Religious beliefs. Apart from worship of the dead and a belief in ghosts, the people have little religion. They call the supreme being Nyasi, who, they say, is to be found in large trees. In times of trouble or sickness they make offerings to him of an animal which is killed under a large tree, and the

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

776 782 flesh is cooked and eaten near by, though sometimes the meat is taken a little distance away and is not eaten under the shadow of the tree.

789 791 **Rain-making.** Rain-making is an important ceremony, but it is performed by a Musoga priest who lives among the people for the purpose of assisting them in discharging those religious obligations which they consider necessary yet do not themselves understand how to perform. The man is treated with great respect and has a comfortable existence among them.

Relationships.

601 **Terms of relationship.** The following terms of relationship were supplied by the Rev. J. J. Willis, now Bishop of Uganda, formerly a C.M.S. Missionary at Maseno, Kavirondo, who says that the pronominal forms for Father and Mother are used, that is, each person says "My father" or "My mother" (m.s. = man speaks, w.s. = woman speaks).

Father, won, wora
Mother, min, mama
Eldest brother (m.s.), kayo, ng'amodwong'ena
Eldest sister (w.s.), nyamin madwong', nyamera madwong'
Sister (m.s.), Nyamin, Nyamera.
Father's brother, omin won, omin worwa
Father's brother's wife, min, minwa mama
Father's brother's child, owat, owadwa
Father's sister, wa, waya
Father's sister's husband, chwor wa, chwor waya
Father's sister's child (boy), wod wa, wod waya
Father's sister's child (girl), nyar wa, nyar waya
Mother's brother, ner, nera
Mother's brother's wife, chi ner, chi nera
Mother's brother's child (boy), woda ner, woda nera
Mother's brother's child (girl), min, mama
Mother's sister, min, mama
Mother's sister's husband, won, wonwa
Mother's sister's child (boy), owat mar nyina hao, owadwa mar nyina hao

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

husband and runs away, the amount which he has already paid on her behalf is returned and the marriage is broken off. If a woman finds herself unmarried after a long period, it is customary for her to go to a chief or a rich man and state that she has come to stay and cook for him. In such case she is usually taken to wife, but a very small complimentary present is paid for her. Chiefs may have from ten to forty wives. The Ja-luo are, generally speaking, very moral. They do not intermarry in

436. EMPTYING THE FISH-BASKETS (JA-LUO)

the same clan, but a man may marry the daughter of one who bears the same name as himself.

The Ja-luo believe in *a supreme God* whom they call "Chieng." This, however, is the same name as the sun. When a man comes out of his house in the morning, he spits towards the east, and in the evening he spits towards the west. If the sunset is extremely red, it is said to indicate the approaching death of an important person. They believe that after death the spirits of the departed go up to the sky. If a hailstorm occurs, no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war. They believe that people can be killed by *witchcraft*, and that a wizard has only to show "medicine" to a person

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

together again, and singly or in twos and threes run out and go through a fight with some invisible foes, again presumably, the evil spirits. They are very serious all the while, and the rest watch in silence their champions as they charge, retreat and cower down behind the huge shields. Then comes more feasting, with the customary offering to the sun, and finally they disperse.

The wailing is kept up in the case of a chief for six days, and performed twice a day at sunrise and sunset, but after the day of the dance each village mourns by itself; for a common person three days is the limit.

The corpse is buried in a recumbent position in the deceased's hut, but the hut continues to be occupied, generally by the deceased man's heir; it is not at once destroyed or disused, as some authorities, among them Sir C. Eliot, maintain. Last of all, when the mourning is over, an offering of beer, grain, and chicken flesh, is put on the grave.

The Jaluo religion is extremely slight. They worship the sun, and to a less extent the moon. They regard the sun as a deity seldom beneficent, more often malignant, and usually apathetic; as one of them said to the writer, "It does not matter how much you pray, you fall sick and die just the same." The offerings made at all important occasions in their daily life they make more with the idea of appeasing him than of obtaining positive benefits.

Witchcraft, however, and demonology occupy their minds far more. The wizard is greatly dreaded, and it is easy for an unscrupulous Kavirondo to obtain his neighbour's property by accusing him of having killed one of his relations by witchcraft, knowing that he will have his neighbours' support and sympathy. The wizard is sought both for good and evil purposes; his aid is invoked alike to detect criminals and to do harm to an adversary. In a recent case brought before the writer a man was accused of having murdered one of his wives by witchcraft. According to his accusers, the supposed murderer missed his razor and accused two of his wives of the theft. They both denied all knowledge of the missing article, and he gave them till the evening of that day to find it. When their term of grace came to an end, and the razor was not produced, he was alleged to have struck one of his wives, who was on the point of bearing a child. He then produced two charms which he affixed to their respective huts, threatening that the thief would be detected by the charm and would die. Next day the woman who was said to have been struck died after producing a still-born child. The curious result was that the man was tried for murder, the accusers believing that the crime had been committed by witchcraft, and the magistrate holding that, if the man caused his wife's death at all, it was by the blow which he was alleged to have given her. The blow turned out to be a myth, and the man was discharged, much to his accusers' disgust.

When a Kavirondo wishes to kill his enemy secretly, the usual method is to bury a dead rat or chicken at his victim's door. If, when the latter comes out the next morning, he treads on the spot where the animal is buried, it is believed that he will die that day.

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

this number, 90 were male suicides and 130 female. I have selected for the purpose of this chapter 10 male cases and 13 female cases as typical, and these were investigated in more detail to provide examples. Considerable time was spent among the villagers in each case, and full discussions were held with the elders in an attempt to determine the motive and the events which led up to the suicide. For obvious reasons, I shall not use correct names when describing these cases.

MALE SUICIDES.

Male suicides in Luo usually follow loss of status. Seven of the ten cases can be so classified. The first five are of the type which involved intense emotional feelings of shame, loss of honor and status within the framework of the indigenous culture. Following these are two case histories of suicides which involved loss of status in the acquired or modern sense. Two cases will be described which involved the loss of status through poverty and the loss of traditional respect of sons, and finally one case which resulted from social ostracism.

The first suicide concerned a man whose younger brother married before he did. In Joluo society, men of the extended family marry in strict order of status, that is, the senior son of the senior wife must marry first. It may happen that he is younger in chronological age than, perhaps, a son of a more junior wife, but even in this circumstance, the younger son in years, who is senior in status, is technically married before his brother—that is, the payment of the first animals for a young girl allow the senior son to marry.

Suicide Case No. 1.

A young man who was the senior son of a senior wife was chronologically the oldest of all the sons in the village. His father and mother were both dead and, although he would eventually become head of the homestead, until he married he